



The Cleveland Museum of Art

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TRUSTEES APPROVE \$12.4 MILLION RESTORATION PLAN FOR ORIGINAL 1916 BUILDING

CLEVELAND — Katharine Lee Reid's first day in the office as sixth director of the Cleveland Museum of Art (CMA) concluded with a board meeting in which CMA trustees voted to accept recommendations for restoration of the exterior of the museum's original 1916 neoclassical building. The work will take three years and cost approximately \$12.4 million. The recommendations are contained in a report from VITETTA restoration architects and engineers, and in a landscape architecture conceptual plan from Sasaki. This is the first project implementing the museum's 1999 Facilities Master Plan, which will also lead to a new addition and major interior renovations to the entire museum complex.

Commenting on the trustees' vote, Mrs. Reid said, "It is symbolic that on my very first day at the museum the board took its first formal steps toward realization of the master plan which will constitute one of the most important undertakings of my tenure here. I salute the late Bob Bergman and Kate Sellers, recently the acting director, for initiating these plans."

The result of this restoration project will be a superbly lit landmark, cleaned and repaired after the ravages of time and pollution, with landscaping that enhances its presentation, surrounded by a welcoming terrace and fully accessible paths. The goal is to fully restore the building's original appearance, while providing modern-day accessibility.

The museum's south (1916) entrance, which closes every winter, will remain closed for the restoration. Beginning around June 1, scaffolding will blanket the 1916 building walls and chain link fencing will surround the work area. (The Fine Arts Garden will remain available to the public.) Work will be divided into three construction cycles (late spring through early fall):

- Year 2000, Phase 1: masonry façades, bronze windows, bronze doors and perimeter security upgrades, including "stabilization of all damaged and loose stones and the repointing of joints, as well as the overall cleaning of the façades and associated elements."

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- Year 2001, Phase 2: terraces, balustrades, retaining walls, steps, and site lighting, including “removing, resetting, repairing and repaving elements such as the steps, curbs, balustrades, and cheek walls repositioning and adding new light poles, floodlights and downlights.”
- Year 2002, Phase 3: re-landscaping and planting terraces and lawns, including adding a fountain and additional seating and relocating outdoor sculptures.

Work on the building’s immense skylight and roofing systems will consist of minor repairs to keep them as watertight as possible until they are replaced as a later element of the Facilities Master Plan.

Funds to support the work have been partially raised: \$4 million from The HRH Family Foundations and \$4 million from The Kelvin and Eleanor Smith Foundation. A request for \$3 million has been submitted to the state legislature.

Michael Sherwin is chairman of the 1916 Building Oversight Committee. After turning his role of CMA president over to Michael J. Horvitz in 1996, Mr. Sherwin almost immediately became chairman of the Facilities Master Planning Committee that evolved into the present oversight committee. Mr. Sherwin thanked members of this committee for being “incredibly hardworking and unstinting in their enthusiasm and focus during months of study of innumerable details and myriad challenges.”

[A summary of VITETTA’s findings is enclosed with this release.]

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Highlights of Overall Findings

The museum and its grounds remain relatively intact for a building and site that are over 80 years old. The masonry of the Museum's exterior walls is generally in good condition. The mortar analysis and archival research confirmed that the masonry was completely repointed in 1950 with subsequent repairs in recent years, meaning that new mortar was installed where it was missing or had failed. While the color of the 1950 pointing mortar matched the original, it is harder than the original and has damaged the marble because it is typically harder than the marble to which it adheres. The result is that the marble will often shear or crack more readily than the mortar. It is recommended to repoint using a lime-rich cement mortar similar to the original mortar removing the failed mortar. However, where adhesion of the existing mortar remains intact, it is recommended to leave it intact to minimize damage to the marble.

Observations noted that many of the features that take the brunt of the weather, such as cornices and drip edges that project outward over the wall surface have deteriorated and will need restoration. Complete repointing is needed at all of the capstones at the very top of the façades, the entire cornice, and the watertable (a drip edge above the building's ground story) that encircle the museum. Small portions of wall areas also require repointing.

The original bronze windows and doors are generally in good condition. They require cleaning but are in operable condition. Typically, the joint between the frames and the stone surround has failed and needs to be repointed or repaired with new sealant.

The aluminum storm windows are later additions dating to the 1971 addition and are in good condition. The ground level storm windows should be moved from their present location in front of the original window grilles to be located behind the grilles that date to 1916. The grilles are heavily oxidized and need to be cleaned and their finish restored.

In general, roughly half of the terraces, paving, balustrades, and steps have been significantly displaced over the last eight decades due to freeze/thaw cycles in combination with an insufficient original drainage system. As a result, rainfall, ground water, and/or surplus irrigation water is not adequately removed from the terrace areas to prevent annual cycles of damage.

One interior element was studied as part of this report. The interior vestibule at the south portico was found to be in fair condition. Generally, the soiled finishes and poor lighting contribute to an overall poor appearance that is not in keeping with the character of the museum.

No major structural failures were observed on the 1916 building; however, some minor cracking was observed around a few windows. Major structural failures were noted at a number of architectural features that surround the 1916 building. These include the east balustrade along the entire length of the east terrace and at the south balustrade surrounding the entire south terrace. Except for the upper run of steps on the south portico, structural failure has occurred at all of the steps due to soil settlement or shifting of the mortar setting beds. Lack of proper drainage was the major fact in all of these failures.

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